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## OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch  
Superintendent

December 1, 2004

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for December 2004

Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for December 2004. This summary can also be found at [www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/). If you would like to be added to a Listserv to receive the Summary of OPI Activities each month, please register at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/regforms/OPIActivities/>.

### Office of the State Superintendent

#### **Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for November 2004:**

- Was interviewed in the print media and on TV and radio, including an interview as Dave Berg's guest on his "Berg In The Morning" radio show
- Presented the 15th Montana Statehood Centennial Bell Award to Montana's History Teacher of the Year
- Participated in the monthly Cabinet meeting, Land Board meeting, and the Board of Public Education meeting
- Filmed an interview for the Montana Heritage Project
- Participated in planning meetings for enhancing OPI information systems
- Met with Governor-Elect Schweitzer on education priorities for the upcoming legislative session
- Met with individuals on a project to send troops overseas care packages from school children
- Participated in a national meeting on the Use of Growth Models Based on Student-Level Data in School Accountability
- Attended the winter conference of the Council of Chief State School Officers
- Convened a half-day strategic planning session for OPI management on Indian Education for All
- Was elected to her second term in office!

#### **Montana Supreme Court Declares Montana School Funding System Unconstitutional**

On November 9, 2004, the Montana Supreme Court issued its opinion in the school funding suit (Columbia Falls Elementary v. State), affirming Judge Sherlock's opinion. The November 9<sup>th</sup> opinion is not the full opinion. The Court noted:

"Given the Court's present work load, it is unlikely that the Court will be able to issue a full opinion on the issues raised and argued before the 2005 legislative session convenes. Nevertheless, it is in the public interest that the executive and legislative branches, as well as the litigants in the present appeal, be advised of the Court's

conclusions as early as possible so that they will have sufficient time to fashion appropriate policies and/or legislation in response to the Court's rulings."

The opinion then goes on to affirm key aspects of Judge Sherlock's ruling, including aspects holding the current funding system unconstitutional, specifying that the school funding system fails to adequately fund Montana's public schools, specifying that the Legislature has failed to meet its obligations regarding cultural integrity of American Indians, and affirming October 1 2005 as the effective date of its order. You can access the decision on the MTSBA website at [www.mtsba.org/currenttemp/litigation/supremecourtdecision.pdf](http://www.mtsba.org/currenttemp/litigation/supremecourtdecision.pdf).

### **Five Montana Teachers Achieve National Board Certification in November**

Please join State Superintendent Linda McCulloch in congratulating the 5 Montana teachers who were recently notified that they achieved National Board Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

- Linda Shilling, High School Mathematics Teacher, Libby High School
- Tim Joern, Middle School Science Teacher, Whitefish Central School
- Janet Nickoloff, Middle School Librarian, Billings Riverside Middle School
- Deanne Gemmill, High School Mathematics Teachers, Billings West High School
- Julie Blakeslee, Elementary Music Teacher, Billings Meadowlark Elementary School

### **OPI Special Education Director Bob Runkel Honored with National Recognition**

On October 24, 2004, at the National Association of State Directors of Special Education Annual Conference, Mr. Bob Runkel was honored with the Glenn I. Latham Excellence Award. This award is the highest recognition given to a state director of special education or state education staff member.

The award is from the Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center (MPRRC), a U.S. Department of Education Programs-funded project. Dr. Latham was the Director of the MPRRC for 20 years and was known regionally, nationally, and internationally for his work and expertise in the areas of behavior management and parenting issues. Dr. Latham was highly respected and was known for his kindness, knowledge, and skills in improving the lives of children with disabilities and their families.

John Copenhaver, Mountain Plains Regional Resource Center, Logan, Utah, commented that Bob Runkel has these same characteristics and has made numerous contributions at the state, regional, and national levels. Bob Runkel was the likely choice for this year's award. Please join State Superintendent McCulloch in congratulating Bob for this well-deserved honor!

### **January Board of Public Education Meeting Topics**

The Board of Public Education will hold its next regular meeting January 13-14, 2005, at their office building, 2500 Broadway, Helena. Tentative agenda information items from the Office of Public Instruction include: the Superintendent's Report, a No Child Left Behind Update, an Assessment update, and the annual Transportation Report. Agenda action items include Accreditation issues. Contacts are Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-0300 or Deputy Superintendent Bud Williams (406) 444-7325.

### Education Licensure

The Board of Public Education has adopted changes to educator licensure rules effective December 3, 2004. These rules provide for licensure of individuals who have out-of-state licenses similar to Montana's Class 4 career and vocational/technical licenses; clarification of

the educator licensure renewal requirements and updating of the Class 4 endorsement areas. The BPE Notice of Proposed Amendment and Adoption Notice can be found on the OPI Legal Division web page. The current text of all OPI and BPE rules can be found on the Legal Division web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/arm/>. OPI Contacts: Elizabeth Keller, 444-2580, [ekeller@state.mt.us](mailto:ekeller@state.mt.us) or Bev Marlow, 444-3172, [bemarlow@state.mt.us](mailto:bemarlow@state.mt.us)

#### Assessment

The November 2004 issue of JUMP, the OPI online assessment newsletter, is available at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/NewsLetters/Nov04AssessNews.pdf>. The newsletter contains important information about preparations for the 2005 Criterion-Referenced Test, release of test items from the 2004 CRT, submission of student demographic data to Measured Progress for bar coding of student answer sheets, timelines for release of Adequate Yearly Progress determinations, test windows for the 2005 norm-referenced tests (NRT) and criterion-referenced tests (CRT), and videotapes available from the November 16<sup>th</sup> videoconference on Questions and Answers about the 2004 Criterion-Referenced Test. OPI Contact: Judy Snow, 444-3656, and [jsnow@state.mt.us](mailto:jsnow@state.mt.us).

#### School Finance and Pupil Transportation

**FY05 Budgets** for each school district are posted on the OPI web site. The budgets are in PDF format in Legal Entity order with any budget recalculations directly below the original. In order to find a specific school district, you will need to know the 4-digit legal entity number assigned to the district. To access the FY05 budgets, click on the following link.

<http://data.opi.state.mt.us/webinfo/maefairs/FY05%20Budgets/>.

OPI Contact: Nica Carte, 444-4401 or [ncarte@state.mt.us](mailto:ncarte@state.mt.us).

#### **Preliminary Maintenance of Effort and Special Education Reversion Reports Posted**

In late November, OPI e-mailed a notice to all districts and special education cooperatives regarding maintenance of effort (MOE) for ESEA Title programs, IDEA Part B and Preschool special education grants, and the state special education allowable cost funding reversion. All district and special education cooperative clerks, district superintendents, special education directors, and county superintendents should review the information carefully. This process requires your immediate attention to correct any reporting errors on the FY2003-04 Trustees' Financial Summary that might have caused MOE or reversion problems. The deadline for corrections is December 20, so prompt action is critical.

OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt, 444-1257 or [joberembt@state.mt.us](mailto:joberembt@state.mt.us).

#### **Central Grant Files Required**

OPI policy requires that each district must maintain a central grant file in the business office for audit purposes. For each grant project, the file must contain the grant application; grant award document; approved grant budget; cash request form(s); record of cash receipts; record of matching expenditures, if required; budget modification forms, if any are filed; any significant correspondence; final reporting and closeout documents. The grant's authorized representative, who is normally the district superintendent, should file copies of all grant documents with the clerk of the district to ensure compliance.

OPI has a standard form called the "Federal/State Grant Control Record" that can be used as a cover page for each grant file. For a copy, see the OPI State and Federal Grants Handbook, Appendix B-1, number 5. The page is available under "Grant Control Record" on the School Finance Webpage: [http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/schoolfinance/forms/gcrecord6\\_02.pdf](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/schoolfinance/forms/gcrecord6_02.pdf).

OPI Contact: Mike Waterman, (406) 444-4524 or [mwaterman@state.mt.us](mailto:mwaterman@state.mt.us).

### **2nd Semester Bus Inspections**

OPI mailed pre-filled TR-13 Bus Inspection Forms to district clerks in late November. Please note that forms are no longer being provided on 5-part paper, as OPI is currently moving toward an electronic system. Buses must pass inspection for 2nd semester by January 31, 2005, in order to be eligible for full funding for the second semester. Please schedule inspections early to allow time for re-inspection by January 31, if necessary. OPI Contact: Maxine Mougeot, 444-3096 or [mmougeot@state.mt.us](mailto:mmougeot@state.mt.us).

### Information Services Division

#### **OPI Video Conferencing Project**

The OPI video conferencing pilot project is off and running. We had our first video conference on November 16 to answer questions concerning the Montana Criterion Reference Test. We had a few technical difficulties, but all in all things went well and the technical difficulties have been worked out.

We have had a great response from the K-12 districts and can now include METNET, VisionNet and EMET sites in our video conferences. VisionNet and Mid-Rivers have both agreed to provide OPI with free bridging capabilities to those sites. We appreciate all of the assistance we have received from METNET, VisionNet and EMET. For more information on the pilot project, please visit our web site at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/streamer/iConference/index.html> or contact Gale Kramlick at 406-444-4411 or email [gkramlick@state.mt.us](mailto:gkramlick@state.mt.us)

#### **Citrix MetaFrame Presentation Server Client**

A security issue has been reported in Citrix MetaFrame Presentation Server Client. OPI recommends that all Citrix users install the updated client software. Before you login to OPI's Internet Reporting and Information System (IRIS), visit the following page, download and install the latest version of Citrix Web client:

<http://discoveringmontana.com/itsd/techmt/citrix/citrixinstall.asp>. For assistance, contact the OPI Internet Services staff at 444-1626.

#### **OPI Selected to Participate in 2005 MT Information Technology Day**

The 2005 MT Information Technology Day (IT Day) is an opportunity for legislators to see how state agencies and private businesses are working as partners to serve the citizens of Montana. OPI has been selected to display both Video-On-Demand for Montana's Public Education Community and the OPI Educator Licensure Service. IT Day will be held in the Capitol Rotunda on January 26, 2005. OPI Contact: Gale Kramlick, 444-4411 or [gkramlick@state.mt.us](mailto:gkramlick@state.mt.us).

### Accreditation Division

#### **Request for Dual Enrollment Information**

The Board of Education's P-20 Committee has established a Dual Enrollment Task Force to examine current policy and practice relating to dual enrollment opportunities in Montana school districts. Dual enrollment refers to students who take postsecondary courses in one of Montana's two or four year institutions while also enrolled in high school. The task force is charged with developing a set of recommendations for the P-20 committee that would provide for more consistency in dual enrollment programs across the state. The task force had its initial meeting last spring and is now preparing for its next meeting scheduled for December 14 in Helena.

In preparation for that meeting, the Office of the Commissioner of Higher Education (OCHE) and the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is gathering information on current practices in the dual enrollment area. Districts that have current dual enrollment agreements with Montana's two and four year institutions are asked to send copies of those agreements to George Burns at OCHE either by e-mail, [gburns@oche.montana.edu](mailto:gburns@oche.montana.edu) or by fax, (406) 449-1469. Districts providing for student participation in such dual enrollment opportunities are also asked to send copies of any applicable board or district policies that govern such participation to George Burns as well.

Districts do not have to send agreements that involve only Advanced Placement (AP) opportunities and/or Tech Prep opportunities. The OPI and OCHE already have copies of these agreements. Your cooperation in this effort would be greatly appreciated. If you have questions or need additional information, please contact George Burns at OCHE, (406) 444-9797.

#### No Child Left Behind: Adequate Yearly Progress

##### **Proposed AYP Determinations Mailed**

The No Child Left Behind Act requires states to make an Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determination of all schools and districts. On November 15, OPI mailed proposed AYP determinations to Montana schools and districts included in the calculated process. The deadline for educators to submit evidence to the State Superintendent in an appeal of the AYP proposed determinations is December 7, 2004. Further information about the appeals process was included in the reports mailed to schools and districts on November 15.

Proposed determinations for schools and districts in the small schools process will be mailed to districts December 3, 2004. The deadline for that appeal is December 23, 2004.

Evidence for appeals should be sent to Margaret Bowles, OPI Accreditation Accountability Specialist, PO Box 202501, Helena, MT 59620-2501.

The November 2004 JUMP Newsletter contains an explanation of the AYP starting points, the small schools process, anticipated timelines, and the minimum number to be used in calculations. You may access the JUMP Newsletter on the OPI Web site at [www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/NewsLetters/Nov04AssessNews.pdf](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/Assessment/NewsLetters/Nov04AssessNews.pdf).

The public release of final AYP determinations is planned for January 14, 2005.

#### Special Education Division

##### **US Congress Reauthorizes the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)**

On November 19, Congress passed the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 (H. R. 1350). The bill is currently awaiting the President's signature. To read the conference report H.R. 1350 go to Thomas (<http://thomas.loc.gov>), click on under the heading Congressional Record, click on This Congress by Date, click on Nov 17 House, scroll down to 81 and click on Printer Friendly Display. The document is 264 pages.

The new law contains many significant improvements. These improvements include more flexibility in the use of Part B funds to serve at-risk students, an opportunity for selected states (up to 15) to significantly reduce paperwork, more educationally sound methods called "Response to Intervention" for Learning Disability identification, and many other improvements.

Perhaps our biggest challenge will be addressing the requirements of the definition of Highly Qualified Special Education Teacher.

Most of the provisions of the new law will have an effective date of July 1, 2005. Training opportunities on changes in the new law will be announced next month. OPI Contact: Bob Runkel, Special Education Director, 444-4429 or [brunkel@state.mt.us](mailto:brunkel@state.mt.us).

### **Important Information regarding Destruction of Student Records**

Public schools in Montana are required to maintain records in accord with state statute and the guidance found in *Schedule No. 7, School District Records Schedule*, distributed by the Montana Local Government Records Committee. When schools have records that are older than 10 years, that is, more than 10 years since the student(s) has been in the school, schools must comply with the requirements of MCA 2-6-405. The following 3-step approach will assist your entity in complying with the law.

**Step 1:** All Local Governments, including School Districts, must complete the Request and Authorization for Records Disposal or Destruction form. Indicate whether or not the record series are “confidential or private” records.

**Step 2:** Send the Request and Authorization for Records Disposal or Destruction form to one of the following: Molly Kruckenberg (Montana State Archives, P.O. Box 201201, Helena, MT, 59620-1201, Phone: 406-444-7482) or Lorin Flesjer (Local Government Services Bureau, P.O. Box 200547, Helena, MT 59620-0547, Phone: 406-841-2909).

If the form lists record series that are subject to the provisions of MCA 2-6-405, Lorin and/or Molly will forward the form to Lynn Keller, Records Manager for the State of Montana. Lynn will send a notice to all entities expressing an interest in knowing what older records are to be destroyed, via an Internet list serve. This is the only notice that is required when complying with MCA 2-6-405. The 180-day period begins the day Lynn posts the information on the Internet list serve. Local governments are encouraged to subscribe to the list serve by sending an e-mail message to the following address: [join-recordsdisposal@lists.state.mt.us](mailto:join-recordsdisposal@lists.state.mt.us).

**Step 3:** During this 180-day period the local government may be contacted by an entity expressing an interest in the records. If contacted during this 180-day period, the local government must decide which entity to transfer the records to. The entity requesting the records is required to pay all costs associated with the transfer. It is recommended that Local Governments adopt a resolution outlining the criteria to be used when deciding which entity will be granted the records. The entities in order of consideration are: the Montana Historical Society/ State Archives, Montana public and private universities and colleges, local historical museums, local historical societies, Montana genealogical groups and the general public.

These 3 steps are taken from the Secretary of State’s website. Their address is: <http://sos.state.mt.us/css/index.asp>. Once there, select Records Management, then, Local Forms and Schedules. There you can access the 3 documents below.

[Disposal Procedures](#)

Local Government Records Disposal Procedures

[Disposal Sample Resolution](#)

Local Government Records Disposal Sample Resolution

[Disposal](#)

Local Government Records Disposal Form



Schools can be assured that special education records marked “confidential” will in fact be destroyed. It is critical that schools have policies in place to assure that student records are disposed of in a timely manner to avoid the lengthy, time consuming process outlined by the Secretary of State and the Montana Local Government Records. Questions? You can contact Tim Harris at [tharris@state.mt.us](mailto:tharris@state.mt.us) or at 406-444-5664.

### **Educational Interpreter Certificate Program**

The Office of Public Instruction (OPI), Division of Special Education, through its IDEA Part B Set-Aside funds is continuing to make available opportunities to support public schools and educational interpreters in meeting the instructional needs of students with deafness and hearing impairments who require the services of an interpreter.

The Educational Interpreter Certificate Program (EICP) Cohort 5, funded by the OPI, and provided through the Distance Opportunities for Interpreter Training Center in Colorado, is a distance learning program that provides K-12 working interpreters with the knowledge and skills to effectively interpret in the K-12 educational setting. The certificate program consists of 30 semester hours of specialized coursework and a required online orientation course. Approximately half of the credits are focused on interpreting skills and the other half are knowledge sets to apply those skills effectively in the classroom.

Recruiting and screening of EICP Cohort 5 applicants will occur between January and May 2005. Applicant selection will occur in June and the online orientation course will be held August 8-September 2, 2005 (tentative date). The EICP courses will begin September 6, 2005. Participants in this cohort group will complete their training in August of 2008. As a part of the project, participants are expected to participate in a three-week summer program held in Denver during the summers of 2006, 2007 and 2008. All costs are included as a part of the program's registration fees (paid by the OPI) with the exception of per diem and transportation for the summer sessions. These costs are usually paid for by the applicant's employer using IDEA Part B funds.

Working educational interpreters who wish to apply for this training opportunity will need to take the Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) in March of this year and obtain a minimum score (rating) of 2.0. The cost of the assessment is paid for by the Office of Public Instruction.

Participants' registration fees for each year of the 3-year project will be paid by the Office of Public Instruction. This will cover tuition, fees, instructional materials, and summer dormitories. Additional information, as well as a copy of the application, will be sent to directors of special education in January. OPI will sponsor three participants in the EICP Cohort 5; therefore, it will be important that applicants complete all of the application requirements in a timely manner.

### **Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA)**

The Educational Interpreter Performance Assessment (EIPA) is specifically designed to provide valid and reliable evaluation of K-12 educational interpreters' skills who serve students with hearing impairments and deafness in K-12 education settings. Educational interpreters are frequently the most significant sign language model for deaf students. Therefore, ensuring competent interpretation skills is essential. Approximately, one-half of the United States is using the EIPA to measure educational interpreter competencies.

OPI makes the EIPA available to educational interpreters at no cost. Educational interpreters are encouraged to take the assessment, once every two years, to receive an accurate measurement of their interpreting skills and to utilize the information from the assessment to determine their professional development needs. OPI utilizes statewide data from the EIPA to develop and support professional development activities for educational interpreters.

School administrators are encouraged to have their educational interpreters take the EIPA and to use the information from the assessment in making programmatic decisions. Information about the EIPA, including registration information for the assessment, is available on the Web site at: <http://www.usu.edu/mprrc/curproj/ask12/index.cfm>.

OPI Contact: Marilyn Pearson, Special Education Division, 444-4428, [mpearson@state.mt.us](mailto:mpearson@state.mt.us).

### Educational Opportunity and Equity Division

#### **2005 Title I Conference**

The 2005 High Priority Schools Institute and Title I Conference will be held February 22-24 in Great Falls at the Heritage Inn. The High Priority Schools Institute will start at 8:30 am on Tuesday, February 22 and end at 3:00 pm. All schools identified for program improvement, corrective action, or restructuring are invited to send teams of teachers and administrators to the Institute. A draft agenda will be sent to all schools in early January. The Title I Conference for all Title I program teachers and administrators will start at 8:30 am on Wednesday, February 23 and will close at 4:00 pm on Thursday, February 24.

A Conference Date Saver will be mailed out to all schools in December with the web address for online registration. OPI Contact: Gwen Smith, [gsmith@state.mt.us](mailto:gsmith@state.mt.us), 406-444-5660, Title I Program, Office of Public Instruction, Helena, MT

#### **Advanced Placement Grant Status**

OPI is pleased to report on the progress of the Advanced Placement Incentive Grant.

- Professional development in AP and pre-AP has proved extremely successful. Despite our low state population, we have been able to offer training in-state, and Montana has offered an AP institute every summer beginning in 2001.
- Online AP course enrollments have skyrocketed. In the fall of 2000, 41 students enrolled in an online AP course. This fall, 164 students have enrolled. More online AP courses are being completed, with more passing grades. Last year for the first time pre-AP online courses were also offered.
- The number of AP exams taken by Montana students has increased from 2,249 in 2000 to 3,029 in 2004. While the number of students scoring 3 or higher on the exams hasn't varied more than a few percentage points, the number of students has increased by 400 (from 1,596 to 1,996) and the number of schools offering the exams has increased from 71 to 84.
- There are many other indications that OPI's goal of general, statewide AP growth and development is being met. A couple of examples are:
  - The number of schools reporting to OPI that they teach AP has risen from 68 in 2001-2002 to 89 in 2004-2005.
  - For three years, the OPI has supported International Baccalaureate (IB) training for Kalispell. Last summer, OPI co-sponsored an "Accelerated Learning Roundtable" for state education leaders at which the IB program in Kalispell, now in its first year of operation, was show-cased. An indirect result of that



Roundtable was MSU Bozeman's recent announcement of their decision to give automatic sophomore status to IB diploma students.

Watch for announcements of AP and pre-AP training this year, and in the summer. School districts that qualify may still apply for AP grants running October 1, 2004 through November 30, 2005. School districts that have at least one school with forty percent or more low income students are eligible. Please use this link to the AP Web page for eligibility, the grant application, and announcements to upcoming training.

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/AdvPlacement/index.html>. OPI Contact: Kathleen Mollohan, 406-444-4317, [kathym@state.mt.us](mailto:kathym@state.mt.us)

### **CollegeEd: 7th Grade College Awareness Resource**

The Office of Public Instruction, in conjunction with The College Board, would like to recommend a valuable resource for your middle school college awareness program. "CollegeEd" was developed by The College Board to inspire all students to attend and succeed in college. The resource is available to all 7th grades in Montana schools eligible for OPI's Advanced Placement Incentive Program. The OPI is subsidizing this initiative, so there is no cost to the school, and a grant application isn't required. If your school is eligible, you will have already received a sample packet of materials from The College Board. These consist of lesson plans and student materials. Sufficient materials for your 7th grade teachers and students may now be ordered from the College Board. To order, please call or email the following:

Ben Underhill 212-373-8755 [bunderhill@collegeboard.org](mailto:bunderhill@collegeboard.org)

Sheri Proctor 212-373-8752 [sproctor@collegeboard.org](mailto:sproctor@collegeboard.org)

### Health Enhancement and Safety Division

#### *Coordinated School Health Unit*

### **2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey**

Planning and registration is underway for the 2005 Youth Risk Behavior Survey which will be administered February 21-23, 2005. The week prior to the survey dates, the contact person named for each school district will receive all necessary materials. Thus far, the tremendous response by superintendents allowing their districts to participate in the YRBS will ensure the success and importance of the YRBS project in Montana. The YRBS contact is Susan Court, 444-3178 or [scourt@state.mt.us](mailto:scourt@state.mt.us).

### *HIV/AIDS/STD Program*

**HIV/AIDS Teacher Training II** is scheduled to be held at the Lincoln Center, Billings Administration Building on January 20, 2005. This advanced training for teachers with a background in HIV/AIDS education will provide updates and a more in-depth approach at presenting teaching activities for a unit in HIV/AIDS prevention education. All interested teachers should register with Vivian Beals at Bitterroot School, 255-3825 or [bealsv@billings.k12.mt.us](mailto:bealsv@billings.k12.mt.us).

The **World AIDS Day Award** for extraordinary efforts of HIV/AIDS prevention education in the school environment will be presented to the Sweet Grass County High School peer educators on December 1, 2004. The peer educators have attended OPI-sponsored HIV/AIDS peer educator development training, and have taken the lessons learned to the grades 7-12 students in Big Timber schools to provide HIV/AIDS prevention education. If you are interested in developing a peer educator program at your school please contact Susan Court, 444-3178 or [scourt@state.mt.us](mailto:scourt@state.mt.us).

## *School Nutrition Unit*

### **Low Carb Diet Fact Sheet**

One of the most highly publicized “diets” in our society today is the “low carb” diet. Examples of “low carb” diets include the Atkins Diet and the Zone Diet. Has this societal interest in carbohydrates resulted in questions about offering “low carb” choices in school lunch, or the amount of carbohydrates in your school’s meals? If so, School Nutrition Programs has a Low Carb fact sheet available that is written specifically for schools. This fact sheet is a great informational handout for parents, teachers, or other community members with concerns about the role of carbohydrates in school meals. It is available on the School Nutrition Programs website: [www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html) under the “Fresh Bytes” pull-down menu. OPI Contact: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

### **New Dietary Guidelines Encourage Consumption of Whole Grains**

The current Dietary Guidelines for Americans recommends daily consumption of foods with whole grains as a primary ingredient to protect against many chronic diseases. Increasing the consumption of fiber rich carbohydrates over those found in highly processed products may also be an important step in fighting our national obesity epidemic. School Nutrition Programs encourages schools to inquire about the availability of whole grain products when developing product specification and making procurement plans. We would also like schools to offer whole grains whenever possible as part of their efforts to promote healthy eating and improve the nutritional well-being of their students. OPI Contact: School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

### **Let’s Eat At School Pilot Project**

The Montana Team Nutrition Program will be conducting a pilot study to identify strategies to increase student participation rates in **high school** breakfast and lunch programs. Four schools will be chosen from the pool based on the selection criteria of the project: high school class (one from each class will be chosen), geographical location (diverse locations from around Montana), school nutrition program participation rate (initial low rate; less than 50 percent participation), interest in the project (willingness to implement change based on program analysis and suggestions). If your school is interested in applying to participate in the pilot, or would like additional information, contact Montana Team Nutrition Program, Attn: Debi Miller, (406) 994-5641, [demiller@state.mt.us](mailto:demiller@state.mt.us)

### **Verification of Income Eligibility**

Effective July 1, 2004, school officials verifying income eligibility for free and reduced-price meals must allow households to provide documentation of income for any point in time between the month prior to application and the time the household is required to provide income documentation. Although not addressed in the statute, this provision is in response to the guidance by the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry to the Secretary during deliberations on the Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004.

### **Changes in Verification Requirements**

The verification process must be completed by December 15, 2004. The new Summary of Verification form has been distributed to schools, and will be due to the School Nutrition Programs office by February 15, 2005; however, schools are strongly encouraged to submit the Summary of Verification form as soon as possible after the December 15 deadline. New documentation requirements on the Summary form include:

- The total number of approved family applications;
- The number of students determined to be eligible for each eligibility category; and
- The total number of students directly certified as eligible for free meals because of the direct certification letter from the Department of Public Health and Human Services,

documentation from the homeless liaison, or administrative applications (though these are not subject to verification).

### **Steps School Districts Can Take Now to Reduce the Burden of School Meals Verification in the Future**

1. Qualify for reduced verification requirements. If you do not get a 100% response rate this year, your verification burden for next year will be higher. *The results of the verification process this school year will determine which school districts qualify for administrative relief next school year.* Taking the extra steps needed to get a 100% response is vital to decreasing verification requirements for next year.
2. Reduce the size of the application pool. Use direct certifications and be aware of students that are categorically eligible for free meals. Large school districts should use a central filing system to decrease the total number of applications in the verification pool (one application per household instead of one per student).

For more information, schools are encouraged to access the most current verification memos on the School Nutrition Programs web site: [www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html) (look under the Regulations and Policies pull-down menu), or contact School Nutrition Programs, 444-2501.

### **All it Takes is Nutrition SENSE Guidebook**

This toolkit provides information to help schools succeed at selling healthful foods and beverages in student-run stores. It contains lists of popular healthy items, standards for evaluating the nutritional value of an item, food safety information, marketing tips and advice from Montana student store advisors. It is available to download at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/nutritionsense.html>. For more information or a free copy of this resource: Team Nutrition Program, Attn: Anne Schumacher, (406) 994-5641, [adschumacher@montana.edu](mailto:adschumacher@montana.edu)

### **“Eat to Be Fit” – New Nutrition Education Resource**

These twelve informational handouts are designed to provide teens with nutrition information. The topics were chosen by Montana teens to be of most interest and importance to them. This resource is designed to serve as a basis for a variety of teaching methods: as an in-class nutrition lesson, the basis for a newsletter or newspaper article, or a bulletin board display. These handouts will available to download on the Office of Public Instruction Health Enhancement web page: [www.opi.state.mt.us/health/Index.html](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/health/Index.html). For more information, or to receive a free hard copy of this resource: Team Nutrition Program, Attn: Anne Schumacher, (406) 994-5641, [adschumacher@montana.edu](mailto:adschumacher@montana.edu).

### **School Breakfast Program Start-up Grants**

Every student needs to eat breakfast, because a hungry child can't learn. Yet many children come to school without eating breakfast. In order to help students succeed in Montana, School Nutrition Programs has been working with schools to help provide students with a healthful breakfast. To that end, School Nutrition Programs is pleased to announce that it will award \$1,500 to twelve school districts that started a new Breakfast Program in the 2004-05 school year. One school per district was chosen based on an application process that ended November 16, 2004. Congratulations to all school districts that were awarded funds.

In Montana, 74.66% of all schools currently participating in the National School Lunch Program also participate in the School Breakfast Program. Seventeen new schools started a SBP in 2004-05, increasing the total number of schools participating to 616. There is still need for further expansion of schools offering breakfast, especially for high school age students. For more information, contact School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444-2501

### *Driver Education/Advanced Driver Education Unit*

#### **Surplus Modular Classroom Sought**

The OPI operated Advanced Driver Education program in Lewistown is undergoing some improvements and a larger classroom is needed. If your school has a modular classroom it no longer needs, the OPI would like an opportunity to discuss its potential use at the Lewistown program. Contact David Huff (406) 444-4396 or [dhuff@state.mt.us](mailto:dhuff@state.mt.us).

#### **Two Traffic Education Research Projects**

The OPI is cooperating with two different teen research projects which will provide valuable information for future teen driver crash reduction efforts in Montana and nationally. These two projects will be seeking school driver education teachers, students, and parents to assist and participate.

##### **Project #1. Montana CheckPoints**

This is a rural adaptation of a project that has shown promise in reducing teen crashes through negotiated teen-parent driving contracts during the first year of driving. The Montana adaptation will be delivered through the Internet and driver education teachers will encourage teens and parents to negotiate an appropriate contract. A preliminary study will assess the internet access availability to Montana families. In this first phase, four hundred families in a cross section of Montana communities will be enlisted to complete a survey.

Both the driver education teachers and parents will be paid a modest fee for their time and effort. Nancy Lunday will be contacting a sample of driver education teachers and schools during the month of December to enlist survey respondents. This project is conducted by Dr. Jessica Hartos of the University of North Carolina – Charlotte, and by the Montana Traffic Education Association. For more information contact Jim Carroll, MTEA Executive Secretary [tjcarrol@rocketmail.com](mailto:tjcarrol@rocketmail.com) or Nancy Lunday at [marc\\_nancy\\_lunday@msn.com](mailto:marc_nancy_lunday@msn.com).

##### **Project #2. Two-Phase Driver Education Teen Research**

Will a one-day behind-the-wheel (BTW) teen driver knowledge and skill assessment intervention provided six months to one year following driver education help reduce teen driver crashes? The Western Transportation Institute of the Montana State University, with a grant from Montana Department of Transportation, will answer this question. The project will enlist 400 teens from Montana driver education programs. Two hundred will be randomly selected for the intervention—a workshop at the Lewistown driving facility; the other 200 will comprise the control group.

Teens in the intervention will participate in a BTW pre-assessment of their driving behaviors, receive remedial instruction, and participate in a BTW post-assessment at the end of the day. A tailored communication of the teen's skills and a prescription for improvement will be provided to the parents and teens. Teen driving behaviors will be tracked for four years. Parents and teens of schools operating driver education programs within 120 miles of Lewistown may be invited to participate. For more information contact David Huff (406) 444-4396 or [dhuff@state.mt.us](mailto:dhuff@state.mt.us).

#### **Traffic Education Master Teacher Nominations**

Please nominate your driver education teachers who qualify for Master Teacher recognition. An application is available at [www.opi.state.mt.us/drivered](http://www.opi.state.mt.us/drivered). Applications are due January 15, 2005 and those qualifying will be recognized at the April 25-27, 2005 traffic education conference in

Billings. For more information contact Fran Penner-Ray (406) 444-4432 or [fpenner-ray@state.mt.us](mailto:fpenner-ray@state.mt.us).

#### Montana Exhibitor Fairs

The purpose of the Montana Exhibitor Fairs is to provide a one-stop venue for teachers and Curriculum Committees to see new products and services, while also gaining the opportunity to hear your company's presentations and specialists.

In 2005 there are two Exhibitor Fairs scheduled in Montana:

- January 27, 2005 Holiday Inn Parkside, Missoula, 9 AM - 5 PM

Emphasis on Science, Health, Math K-12, Reading/Language Arts K-12, Technology, and World Languages K-12

- February 28 2005 Best Western Heritage Inn, Great Falls, 10 AM - 6 PM

Emphasis on Reading K-12, Math K-12, Social Studies K-12, Science K-12, World Languages. Also Business, Art, Music, Vocational Program Materials. Technology

For information, contact Janet Thomson, MASCD Executive Director ([jannyt@bresnan.net](mailto:jannyt@bresnan.net)), 406-453-6242, 2724 Delmar Drive, Great Falls, MT 59404

#### Fulbright Memorial Fund (FMF) Teacher Program

The Fulbright Memorial Fund (FMF) Teacher Program provides U.S. primary and secondary school teachers and administrators with the opportunity to participate in three-week study visits to Japan and to return home with a follow-on plan designed to introduce Japanese culture to American students. The FMF Program, which is **fully funded** by the Japanese Government, aims to increase understanding between Japan and the United States and is intended to extend far beyond the educators who participate. FMF alumni agree to share what they have learned about Japan with their students, colleagues, and community members upon returning to the United States. This year's application deadline is December 10, 2004. We hope that you will consider applying to this noteworthy program and that you will forward this email to other eligible teachers and administrators in your school and state. For more information about FMF or to access our **online application**, please visit our website at [www.iie.org/fmf](http://www.iie.org/fmf). We would also be pleased to send you printed materials at your request. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any questions or for more information at 1-888-527-2636 or [fmf@iie.org](mailto:fmf@iie.org).